ESCAPE TO EQUATUS

LEARNING

Help the Mathmen escape by solving problems
(ages 5 and up)

by Thomas Ferguson

Requires: ATARI BASIC Language Cartridge
      One ATARI Joystick Controller
          Cassette version (1):   ATARI 410 Program Recorder
          (APX-10190)   24K RAM

          Diskette version (1):   ATARI 810 Disk Drive
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Edition B

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Program and manual contents ©1982 Thomas Ferguson

Distributed By

The ATARI Program Exchange
P.O. Box 3705
Santa Clara, CA 95055

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Introduction

OVERVIEW

Many light years ago in a distant galaxy, the planet Mathema collided with a meteor. The planet was completely destroyed, but moments before the end, a small band of Mathemen escaped aboard the giant robot ship Metrica. They knew they'd have to travel through space looking for a new home if they were to survive.

After a long journey, the Mathemen sighted the moon Equatus. Since Equatus seemed to be deserted, Metrica cautiously entered a stationary orbit above the largest crater. The desperate survivors decided to land an expeditionary force, and guided the Metrica to the floor of the giant crater.

Fortunately, all Metrica-class robot ships carry three Solutus fighter ships. The Mathemen quickly unloaded the fighter ships and stored them in a cave in the wall of the crater. Then, the Mathemen expeditionary force formed a defensive perimeter around the Metrica landing site.

As the expeditionary force began to explore the crater, the Metrica fired its rocket engines and returned to orbit. No sooner had Metrica disappeared than the Mathemen realized they were not alone! An Equacion battle cruiser roared across the mouth of the crater expelling a mathematical problem, and unleashing a lethal number line that plummeted toward the nearly defenseless Mathemen.

It seems as if there's no escape—but that's where you come in. Your mission is to race to the cave in the crater wall and pilot one of the Solutus fighter ships to defend the Mathemen expeditionary force. Each Solutus fighter is equipped with dual Numerus lasers. Use these powerful lasers to blast the correct answer to the problem from the descending number line. Every correct answer saves the Mathemen, allowing precious time for the Metrica to return.

But be careful...the relentless Equacion battle cruiser attacks again and again. Good luck!

REQUIRED ACCESSORIES

ATARI BASIC Language Cartidge

One ATARI Joystick Controller

Cassette version

24K RAM
ATARI 410 Program Recorder

Diskette version

24K RAM
ATARI 810 Disk Drive

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My special thanks to Sheldon Leemon for his wonderful character set editor INSTEDIT (APX 10060 and APX 20060). All of the playfield and player-missile graphics used in ESCAPE TO EQUATUS were designed using INSTEDIT.

CONTACTING THE AUTHOR

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Getting started

LOADING ESCAPE TO EQUATUS INTO COMPUTER MEMORY

1. Insert the ATARI BASIC Language Cartridge in the cartridge slot of your computer.

2. Plug your Joystick Controller into the first controller jack of your computer console.

3. If you have the cassette version of ESCAPE TO EQUATUS:

    a. Have your computer turned OFF.

    b. Turn on your TV set.

    c. Insert the ESCAPE TO EQUATUS cassette into the program recorder's cassette holder and press REWIND on the recorder until the tape rewinds completely. Then press PLAY to prepare the program recorder for loading the program.

    d. Turn on the computer while holding down the START key.

    e. When you hear a beep, release the START key and press the RETURN key.

If you have the diskette version of ESCAPE TO EQUATUS:

    a. Have your computer turned OFF.

    b. Turn on your disk drive.

    c. When the BUSY light goes out, open the disk drive door and insert the ESCAPE TO EQUATUS diskette with the label in the lower right-hand corner nearest to you. Close the door. (Use disk drive one if you have more than one drive.)

    d. Turn on your computer and your TV set. The program will load into computer memory and start automatically.

THE FIRST DISPLAY SCREEN

After ESCAPE TO EQUATUS loads into computer memory, the title screen displays, with the program title, the word "LOADING" and the copyright notice. Next, you see the crater with its ragged walls.

The program title explodes across the top of the screen and you're asked to stand by.

SKILL LEVELS

The four ESCAPE TO EQUATUS skill levels appear one at a time at the bottom of the screen, beginning with TROOPER. Each time you press the SELECT key, another level displays. Here's what you can expect at each level:

TROOPER:	addition and subtraction of numbers from 1 through 5
PENETRATOR:	addition, subtraction, division and multiplication of numbers from 1 through 5
DETONATOR:	addition, subtraction, division and multiplication of numbers from 1 through 12
BLASTER	addition, subtraction, division and multiplication of numbers from 6 through 24

The speeds of the Equacion battle cruiser and the descending number line increase as you choose higher skill levels.

STARTING

After you select your skill level, start a game by pressing either the START key or the red button on your Joystick Controller.

Playing ESCAPE TO EQUATUS

DEFENDING THE MATHEMEN

As soon as you press the START key or the red joystick button, you're on BATTLE ALERT. Metrica descends from orbit to land on the floor of the crater. The Mathemen in the expeditionary force exit to take defensive positions. Three Solutus fighter ships are stored in the cave in the right crater wall. Metrica returns to orbit high above Equatus.

Now jump into the cockpit of a Solutus fighter. Your ship's canopy closes and you're pinned back in your seat as you rocket from the cave to a position above the Mathemen. Brace yourself for action, because the Equacion battle cruiser roars overhead expelling a mathematical problem and unleashing the lethal number line.

Quickly, you must solve the problem. Hold your joystick with the red button in the upper left position. Maneuver your Solutus fighter left or right under the number of the correct answer by moving the joystick to the left or right. When you're under the correct number, press the red button to fire your Numerus lasers. The lasers flash skyward exploding the number above your ship.

For example, if the problem is 4 + 4 = , move your joystick to the right to position your Solutus fighter under the number 8. Press the red button to fire your lasers and explode the number 8 from the descending number line. The number 8 displays after the equal sign on the problem line at the top of the screen. You've saved the Mathemen this time!

If the answer requires two or three digits, just maneuver your Solutus fighter under each number in order from left to right and explode each digit from the number line.

If you make a mistake and explode an incorrect number from the number line, quickly pull straight back (toward you) on the joystick. This erases the last number exploded from the answer line at the top of the screen. You may erase only one incorrect number for each problem. After erasing an incorrect number, maneuver your Solutus fighter under the correct one and again fire your Numerus lasers.

The joystick directs the fighter ship as follows:

```
MOVES FIGHTER <─────────┬─────────> MOVES FIGHTER
   TO LEFT              │              TO RIGHT
                        │
                        ▼
        ERASES ONE WRONG NUMBER IN ANSWER
```
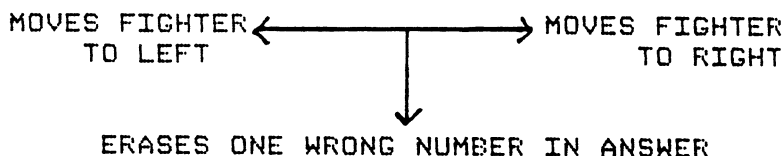
Figure 1   Joystick movement

If you don't answer correctly before the number line descends upon the Mathemen, your Solutus fighter ship vaporizes and some of the Mathemen dematerialize. The unfortunate Mathemen rematerialize =in an underground cavern where they remain immobilized. Don't worry; you have a chance to save these captives during the RE-TRY phase of the game.

When a fighter ship vaporizes, the number in the cave in the crater wall decreases. You have three fighter ships at the start.

When you've lost a fighter ship (either by answering incorrectly or by answering too slowly), the correct answer appears after the equal sign at the top of the screen. You have a moment to study the correct answer before the next assault of the Equacion battle cruiser.

Your Solutus fighter can hyperwarp from one end of the descending number line to the other. If you're under the 0 and move your joystick to the left, your Solutus fighter hyperwarps to the other end of the line under the 9. You can hyperwarp in the other direction by moving the joystick to the right when you're under 9 to relocate your ship under 0.

Remember, you have only three Solutus fighter ships and a limited number of Numerus lasers for each problem. Be accurate and be careful!

RE-TRY FEATURE

When you finally lose all three Solutus fighter ships, the Equacion battle cruiser returns, carrying the three problems you answered incorrectly or failed to answer in time. You have a second chance to answer them correctly, following exactly the same procedure as before. If you succeed, the Mathemen awaken from their deep immobilization. They climb back to the crater floor to await rescue by the Metrica.

ENDING THE GAME

Following the RE-TRY phase, Metrica again descends from orbit to rescue any remaining members of the Mathemen expeditionary force. You may select a new skill level and begin your next game.

SCORING

Your score for the current game displays at the lower left of the screen. The high score displays at the lower right. The number of remaining Solutus fighter ships displays on the crater wall to the right of the Mathemen.

The number of points you earn for each correct answer depends on the number of digits in the correct answer, and on how high up on the screen the number line is when you correctly solve the problem. You don't lose any points for incorrect answers.

During the RE-TRY phase of the game, you still earn points, but not so many as during regular play.
You win 500 bonus points for each 1,000 points you score.

HELPFUL HINTS

You have an advantage if you can solve the problem quickly while the lethal number line is still at the top, just beginning its descent. This is especially important for two- and three- digit answers.

To maneuver and position your Solutus fighter ship more accurately, keep your eye on the descending number line rather than on the Solutus fighter or the Mathemen expeditionary force.

RESTARTING A GAME

If you're in the middle of a game, and you want to start over, press the SYSTEM RESET key. Then type RUN and press the RETURN key. You have a short wait while you're asked to stand by.

REPLAYING A GAME

At the end of each game, you have a chance to choose another skill level and start another round of play.

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Review Form

We're interested in your experiences with APX programs and documentation, both favorable and unfavorable. Many of our authors are eager to improve their programs if they know what you want. And, of course, we want to know about any bugs that slipped by us, so that the author can fix them. We also want to know whether our instructions are meeting your needs. You are our best source for suggesting improvements! Please help us by taking a moment to fill in this review sheet. Fold the sheet in thirds and seal it so that the address on the bottom of the back becomes the envelope front. Thank you for helping us!

1. Name and APX number of program.

_____

_____

2. If you have problems using the program, please describe them here.

_____

_____

_____

3. What do you especially like about this program?

_____

_____

_____

4. What do you think the program's weaknesses are?

_____

_____

_____

5. How can the catalog description be more accurate or comprehensive?

_____

_____

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being "poor" and 10 being "excellent", please rate the following aspects of this program:

_____ Easy to use
_____ User-oriented (e.g., menus, prompts, clear language)
_____ Enjoyable
_____ Self-instructive
_____ Use (non-game programs)
_____ Imaginative graphics and sound

7. Describe any technical errors you found in the user instructions (please give page numbers).

_____

_____

_____

8. What did you especially like about the user instructions?

_____

_____

_____

9. What revisions or additions would improve these instructions?

_____

_____

_____

10. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 representing "poor" and 10 representing "excellent", how would you rate the user instructions and why?

_____

_____

11. Other comments about the program or user instructions:

_____

_____

_____

From

_____

_____

_____

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